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## Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group

June 20, 2002

Memorandum

To: PNWCG Member Agency Administrators:

From: Bob Anderson, Chair

Subject: Addendum to the Pacific Northwest Interagency Preparedness Plan

The Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group supports the attached 2002 addendum to the Pacific Northwest Interagency Preparedness Plan.

As of June 20, 2002, the Northwest area will be in a Preparedness Level 3, and Nationally, Preparedness level 5. The purpose of this plan is to ensure timely recognition of the approaching critical fire situation, establish an assessment process, establish priorities, and implement actions in response to these situations.

The 2002 update reflects lessons learned from the 2000 and 2001 fire seasons and changes in wildland fire policy since the mid-1990s.

/s/Barbara J. Kennedy (for)  
Bob Anderson, chair  
PNWCG

1 Attachment – 2002 Addendum (8 pp)

## 2002 Addendum

### Pacific Northwest Interagency Preparedness Plan

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Interagency Preparedness Plan has been updated in 2002 in order to reflect lessons learned from 2000 and 2001 fire seasons. Changes in wildland fire policy since the mid-1990's also necessitated a re-evaluation of the plan. The purpose of this plan is to ensure timely recognition of approaching critical fire situations, establish an assessment process, establishing priorities, and for implementing actions to respond to these situations.

The objective of this plan is to provide information adequate to make a decision that provides a high probability of attaining an appropriate level of preparedness. This Plan covers READINESS for a potential wildfire incident(s), or an active incident(s), that endanger life, property or natural resources under jurisdiction of federal wildland fire protection agencies in the States of Oregon and Washington.

A process has been developed to compute a Preparedness Level (PL) on a scale of 1.0 to 5.0 to ordinate the level of readiness. At each Preparedness Level, a recommended set of actions is provided. This Plan documents actions to be considered by these Federal agencies in the states of Washington and Oregon; USDA Forest Service, USDI Bureau of Land Management, USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs, USDI Park Service, and the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service.

This Preparedness Plan addresses all wildland fire activities. It may be expanded in the future to cover other types of incidents such as floods, earthquakes, and volcanoes.

This Plan defines a process whereby a Preparedness Level will be determined for the current day as well as for 3, 10, and 30 day periods of time in the future. It further defines the recommended actions to be considered for these time periods.

To provide for valid information to support this decision, it will be the responsibility of each participating agency to submit accurate situation reports daily during the designated period, to communicate promptly to the NWCC Manager situations and concerns needing special consideration in the determination of the PL, and to support actions proposed or implemented under this plan.

## DETERMINATION OF PREPAREDNESS LEVELS

A Preparedness Level for the Northwest Area (Oregon & Washington) will be determined by the Northwest Interagency Coordination Center (NWCC) Manager and transmitted to all agencies covered by this plan. This Preparedness Level is computed for the current day as well as the three future time periods defined. As primary input to this decision, an Initial Preparedness Level (IPL) will be determined using the objective determination of the following three separate items:

- 1) An assessment of workload and risk as determined by current and anticipated prescribed fire and wildfire activity. This measure is used to measure a real and potential need for fire suppression resources.
- 2) An assessment of fire fighting capability to meet the workload demands. Type 2 crews are used as an indicator of overall resource availability.
- 3) A measure of fire season severity as indicated using the historical energy release component(ERC) to determine the dryness of larger fuels and a measure of fire intensity. A Severity Projection Index (SPI) Table provides probabilities the ERC will be at various levels in the future given its level today. This will also yield indications of the progression of drought or wet conditions based on historical conditions by time period.
- 4) The determination of the final preparedness level is a management decision and the responsibility of the NWCC Manager, Emergency Operations Manager or designated acting and needs to consider the following subjective criteria as a minimum:
  - a) The 3, 10, and 30 day weather forecasts and projections.
  - b) Additional risk of wildfire occurrence or existing wildfire activity not measured by the Initial Preparedness Level. This could include wildfire activity both nationally and within the NW Geographic Area.
  - c) Social/political considerations.
  - d) Other Considerations including the commitment and availability of resources in other Geographic Areas.

These actions will be considered at each of the benchmark time intervals of 3 days, 10 days, and 30 days into the future for each preparedness level.

## **ACTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED AT EACH PREPAREDNESS LEVEL**

Actions to be considered are grouped into three categories as follows:

- Actions to inform and involve agency officials, industry and the public.
- Actions to assess, prioritize, and manage workload.
- Actions to increase response capability.

The following matrices address these actions in bullet statement form

## Actions to be considered based on 3 Day Outlook

Predicted Preparedness Level - 3 days					Assigned to	Actions to be considered to Inform and/or Involve
1	2	3	4	5+		
			X	X	NW Area MAC	Notify appropriate State agencies of possible need for resources such as the National Guard
X	X	X	X	X	NWCC Manager	Notify agency cooperators of all fires and locations
		X	X	X		Brief Agency Administrators daily on resource availability and current and projected critical resource needs
		X	X	X		Press releases on fire situation and prevention measures (coordinated with the PNWCG Fire Prevention Working Team)
X	X	X	X	X	Unit Fire Mgmt. Officer	Notify agency cooperators of all fires and locations and other activities which effect the availability of resources
X	X	X	X	X	Unit Dispatch Coordinators	Submit daily situation and other reports as required in the NW Area Mobilization Guide

Predicted Preparedness Level - 3 days					Assigned to	Actions to be considered to Prioritize Workload
1	2	3	4	5+		
		X			NW Area MAC	Conduct conference calls to assess priorities
				X		Coordinate State level restrictions and closures
			X	X	NWCC Manager	Convene the NW MAC via conference call or in person
			X	X		Facilitate NW MAC conference call(s)
		X	X	X	Unit Agency Administrators	Alter management strategies as needed on wildland fires
		X	X	X		Identify and activate workload priorities
		X				Consider convening the Sub-Geo Area MAC via conference call or in person
		X	X	X	Unit Fire Mgmt. Officers	Consider actions to reduce risk during mop up and patrol of wildland and prescribed fires
			X			Implement the restricted public use fire/closure plan and ensure restrictions cover as a minimum: fire use, off-highway vehicles, and smoking
				X		Continue public use restrictions and implement the next level
				X		Implement mitigation actions for significant high risk planned events
		X	X	X	Sub-Geo Area MACs	Prepare strategies to deal with potential failure to meet incident or project objectives
			X	X	Unit Dispatch Coordinators	Evaluate existing and future demands for resources and advise local Agency Administrators

Predicted Preparedness Level - 3 days					Assigned to	Actions to be considered to Increase Capability
1	2	3	4	5+		
			X	X	NW Area MAC	Notify appropriate State agencies of possible need for resources such as the National Guard
		X	X	X	NWCC Manager	Consider prepositioning and extending staffing hours of "shared resources"
			X	X	Unit Agency Administrators	Consider restrictions on the use of fire management resources and tactics
		X				Strongly consider restricting fire use to designated use only
		X	X	X	Unit Fire Mgmt. Officers	Reaffirm minimum initial attack capability
		X	X	X		Consider prepositioning resources and appropriate leadership for "impending threat" situations
X	X	X	X	X	Unit Dispatch Coordinators	Report availability of resources according to established guidelines

## Actions to be considered based on 10 Day Outlook

Predicted Preparedness Level-10 days					Assigned to	Actions to be considered to Inform and/or Involve
1	2	3	4	5+		
			X	X	NW Area MAC	Notify appropriate State agencies of possible need for resources such as the National Guard
			X	X		Brief Agency Administrators on resource availability and critical needs
			X	X		Brief forest industry of situation and possible resource needs
				X		Consider State level restrictions and closures
			X	X	State/Regional level Agency Administrators	Consider letter of commitment to wildland fire suppression activities to Unit level Agency Administrators with target relief
			X	X	NWCC Manager	Alert NICC of possible resource needs including a description of opportunities to utilize military and foreign resources
			X	X		Press releases on fire situation and prevention measures (coordinated with the PNWCG Fire Prevention Working Team)
			X	X		Consider adding key Liaison positions (e.g. Military, Contract, etc)
			X	X	Sub-Geo Area MAC	Brief Agency Administrators on resource availability and critical needs
			X	X	Unit Agency Administrators	Brief local officials and key constituents on fire situation and potential impacts
				X		Consider closure or campfire bans at specific areas

Predicted Preparedness Level-10 days					Assigned to	Actions to be considered to Prioritize Workload
1	2	3	4	5+		
			X	X	NW Area MAC	Develop long-term strategies for remainder of the fire season
			X			Activate an Area/National fire prevention education team
				X		Evaluate all previous preparedness levels for effectiveness, modify as necessary
X	X	X	X	X	NWCC Manager	Track activity level and resource commitment to active WFUs (Wildland Fire Use) fires
X	X	X	X	X	Unit Agency Administrators	Re-evaluate fire management and incident strategies and objectives to acknowledge a stressed or exhausted workforce
		X	X	X	Unit Fire Mgmt. Officers	Reaffirm minimum initial attack needs which must be maintained
	X					Implement special or targeted fire prevention actions for high use periods/activities
				X		Consider implementing mitigation actions for significant high risk planned events
			X	X	Sub-Geo Area MAC	Develop long-term strategies for remainder of the fire season

Predicted Preparedness Level-10 days					Assigned to	Actions to be considered to Increase Capability
1	2	3	4	5+		
			X	X	NW Area MAC	Consider Emergency Firefighter training needs
			X		State/Regional level Agency Administrators	Approves the initiation of new or continuation of existing WFUs and prescribed fire activities following consultation with NW Area MAC
				X		Recommend and request approval from the "National Office" for the initiation of new or continuation of existing WFUs and prescribed fire activities
		X			Unit Agency Administrators	Consider non-fire support to the fire prevention program
			X	X		Recommend and request approval from the "State/Regional Office" for the initiation of new or continuation of existing WFUs and prescribed fire activities
X	X	X	X	X	Unit Fire Mgmt. Officers	Manage new ignitions and project initiation actions based upon local assessment
		X	X	X		Consider acquiring additional resources (crews, engines, SEATs, helicopters, dozers, and appropriate leadership, etc.) for short duration and 14-30 days

## Actions to be considered based on 30 Day Outlook

Predicted Preparedness Level-30 days					Assigned to	Actions to be considered to Inform and/or Involve
1	2	3	4	5+		
X	X	X	X	X	NWCC Manager	Maintain a continuous assessment of fire danger and severity indices, drought indices, resource availability, climatology and meteorology
		X	X	X		Press releases on fire situation and prevention measures (coordinated with the PNWCG Fire Prevention Working Team)
		X	X	X	Unit Agency Administrators	Press releases on fire situation and prevention measures (coordinated with local cooperators)

Predicted Preparedness Level-30 days					Assigned to	Actions to be considered to Prioritize Workload
1	2	3	4	5+		
			X	X	NW Area MAC	Provide feedback to Agencies involved in or planning WFUs and prescribed fires
			X			Consider activation of an Area/National fire prevention education team
X					NWCC Manager	Ensure all preseason preparedness actions are completed and in place
			X	X		Monitor the progress of all previously approved WFUs and prescribed fires
			X	X	State/Regional level Agency Administrators	Monitor and evaluate previously approved WFUs and prescribed fires in consultation with NW Area MAC
X					Unit Agency Administrators	Identify and initiate contact with members of the Sub-Geo Area MAC
X					Unit Fire Mgmt. Officers	Ensure all preseason preparedness actions are completed and in place including: fire prevention plan, media plan, patrol plan, fire prevention inspections, IFPL system functioning, and community involvement and outreach programs
X	X	X	X	X		Coordinate all restriction activities with cooperators
				X		Evaluate the necessary requirement for significant high risk planned events

Predicted Preparedness Level-10 days					Assigned to	Actions to be considered to Increase Capability
1	2	3	4	5+		
			X	X	NW Area MAC	Consider Emergency Firefighter training and recruitment programs
		X	X	X	State/Regional level Agency Administrators	Analyze the need and request additional emergency funding in coordination with other cooperating agencies
			X	X	Unit Agency Administrators	Include fire prevention/mitigation in all severity requests